

Tortured Soul

I have a friend
like we all have a friend
that gets up on the sofa
at parties and talks like a
grand orator

addressing everyone
the way the President addresses the country during war time
the regulars fed up with his nonsense
and the new folks
completely attentive
to his ramblings

as if when
he got a few drinks
into him
his duty had become
persuading a rambunctious
Roman mob

spitting hexes and warnings
like a possessed Baptist preacher
flinging holy water
and speaking in tongues

“Oh, shut up you fool!”
I shout

“Let him speak! He’s a genius!”
a woman shouts back

“If you think he’s a genius
then you’re as much of an ass as he is!”

my friend
steps down from the sofa

he approaches me with his hand outreached
like some Evangelical dullard

“This man has a toured soul!” he says

“At least I have a fucking soul!” I retort

*“A woman has done terrible things
to this man’s soul!”*

I didn’t feel like hearing it
so I left the party
and found a quiet
park to rest in

it was a summer’s night
but the heat of the day
had subsided
and it was almost
cool out

I laid long ways
on the picnic table
and thought

is my soul that tortured? can people see it? do I wear it on my face?

I wasn’t sure
if I believed in a soul
but I believed
in energy

I believed
my body gave
off an energy

and I became
worried that I had somehow
damaged it

that I had subjected it
to too much torture
and now it was permanently
disfigured

I knew my heart
bore the scars

like fat bacon strips
of my past love

but I almost wore
them like a badge of honor

I had tried it
and failed
but no one could
say I didn't try

but how do you get rid
of a grease stain
on a person's soul?

had she done that to me, as well?

I felt like pushing my
soul deep down in me
and pretending
it wasn't there

and I thought
perhaps people don't have a soul
in the divine sense
but they had a spirit

and mine,
most certainly
wasn't broken.